CORRECTIONAL OASIS

A PUBLICATION OF
DESERT WATERS CORRECTIONAL OUTREACH
A NONPROFIT FOR THE WELL-BEING OF PUBLIC SAFETY STAFF AND THEIR FAMILIES

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 2

February 2016

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DWCO Services

Building Our Resilience Muscles

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John Homer Miller said, "Circumstances and situations do color life, but you have been given the mind to choose what the color shall be." If I had one recommendation for us all, it'd be **to hold onto a hopeful outlook no matter what the circumstances**. By that I mean to deliberately and courageously choose to look for positives in challenges, routinely viewing problems as opportunities, and trusting that positive outcomes will emerge from difficulties as we keep choosing life and doing the right thing. The choice of a positive perspective boosts our resilience and mood by reducing tension, anxiety, anger, and discouragement—all components of what we call, for lack of a better term, stress. Optimism infuses us with energy and hope. The question of course is, do we *truly* have the power to choose how we interpret circumstances and how we respond? Or do our situations control us, dictating to us how to think and feel?

I believe that we all have the power of choice, just as we are born with certain muscles. But opting for a positive mindset in the midst of trials does not come automatically. For many of us, our original default setting is negative. **A habitually positive attitude must be developed.** Like any muscle, for enduring positivity to become stronger, it must be exercised. And that happens only by doing repetitions against the resistance of adversity. So, challenges offer us the way to build inner strength, shaping our character for the better. Each repetition counts. The more often we intentionally choose to find silver linings in clouds, and the more lemonade we make from lemons we've been given, the easier it gets to trust that there are blessings hidden in packages that adversity delivers on our doorstep. Instead of losing heart, trust helps us choose to focus on something loving and bigger than our situation, and helps us resolve to hang on for the ride. As we hold on, we declare that life can emerge from death just as surely as spring comes after winter. This attitude choice can save us much grief, hurt, and waste of energy.

Richard Bach wrote, "What the caterpillar calls the end of the world, the master calls a butterfly." Let's not miss opportunities for positive growth and positive transformation. Let's keep working out in the gym of life, lifting the weights of difficulties, and cooperating in the shaping of who we are throughout life's journey to indeed become the best we can be.

What Is Psychological Trauma?

By Caterina G. Spinaris and Michael D. Denhof

In the *Correctional Oasis* and in Desert Waters' work in general we frequently mention the terms "psychological trauma," "complex trauma," and "Post-traumatic Stress Disorder"—"PTSD" for short, often without a detailed explanation. What do these terms really mean? And to what extent are they relevant to the occupational experience of corrections professionals? To address these issues to at least some degree, we'll be offering a series on these subjects in the *Correctional Oasis* during 2016. I realize that this is a very serious and possibly disturbing topic to some in several respects. At the same time, as we'll aim to show, its reality and prevalence in corrections work necessitate that it be addressed, as lives—and definitely quality of life, health and functioning—are potentially on the line.

Before proceeding any further, I want to emphasize that healing after traumatization is a distinct possibility. It is a more challenging situation when people have endured multiple traumatic exposures, but it IS a possibility, to at least some degree.

Observations in wartime have shown than even the "toughest of the tough" can be affected by exposure to life-threatening events. Over the years, various terms were coined to describe the outcome of combat exposure, such as "soldier's heart" (American Civil War), "shell shock" (World War I), "war neurosis" (World War II), "Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder" (Vietnam War), and "combat stress reaction" (1982 Israeli-Lebanon War).

Up to fairly recently, the corrections culture of "toughness" has tended to leave the issue of occupational trauma in the corrections "war zone" unaddressed. Being "tough" is essentially a requirement for the job—especially for security/custody staff. Employees who experience or witness life-threatening incidents are burdened with the cultural expectation in their workplace that they should "get back on the horse" immediately, and continue functioning unaffected, as if nothing unusual has happened. The heavy weight of such an expectation can silence affected staff, reducing the likelihood that they will acknowledge to coworkers or even to themselves what may be really going on with them emotionally and mentally. Because of the workplace culture's valuing of toughness, they do not want to do anything that would make them look "weak" in the eyes of their comrades. This culture of "toughness" may also contribute to their feeling ashamed for even wishing they could get some help to deal with the fallout of what they've been through or what they've witnessed.

The reality however is that one of the inescapable occupational hazards of corrections work involves staff's exposure to a variety of types of potentially traumatizing material, whether directly or indirectly. This occurs much more so for corrections personnel than for the average citizen, with the risk of suffering enduring negative neurobiological and psychological changes in health and functioning.

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What Is Psychological Trauma? (continued from page 2)

Traumatic Events

In order to be considered psychologically traumatized, and possibly later diagnosed as suffering from PTSD, a person must have been exposed to at least one traumatic incident.

So what types of incidents qualify as traumatic?

Before proceeding further, we'd like to point out that the word "trauma" comes from the Greek word for "wound" or "injury." What we are asking then is, what types of events might wound the soul (and even the brain) of those who experience them, witness them, or even just learn about them—oftentimes, over and over again?

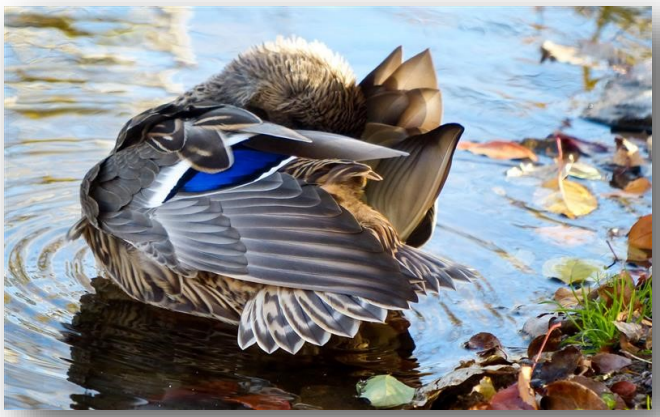
According to the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition* (DSM-5; 2013)[1], the criterion for what constitutes a traumatic event (diagnostic Criterion A) that can result in PTSD involves a person's exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence in one or more of the following ways:

1. Directly experiencing the traumatic event(s), that is, having the event(s) happen to oneself.
2. Witnessing, in person, the event(s) as it/they occurred to others.
3. Learning that the actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence occurred to a close family member or close friend. In cases of actual or threatened death, the event(s) must have been violent or accidental.
4. Experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event(s) (e.g., police officers repeatedly exposed to details of child abuse). This criterion of indirect exposure does not apply to exposure through electronic media, television, movies, or pictures, unless this exposure is work related (p. 271, emphasis added).

This updated definition of traumatic stress in the DSM-5 indicates that much of what corrections professionals are routinely exposed to at work *is* in fact traumatic. They may be assaulted themselves in a variety of ways, thus experiencing actual or threatened serious injury, actual or threatened sexual violation, threatened death, or actual death. They *directly* witness coworkers' or offenders' actual or threatened serious injury, actual or threatened sexual violation, and actual or threatened death. They are *indirectly* exposed to work-related traumatic material—such as learning about the violent, accidental death or threatened death of a coworker with whom they are close.

Moreover, corrections staff's repeated or extreme exposure to death, serious injury or sexual violation indirectly through various electronic media, reports, files, videos, or pictures as part of their vocational role, is now also considered to be traumatic.

So what is the research-based evidence about the degree of corrections staff's exposure to traumatic events?



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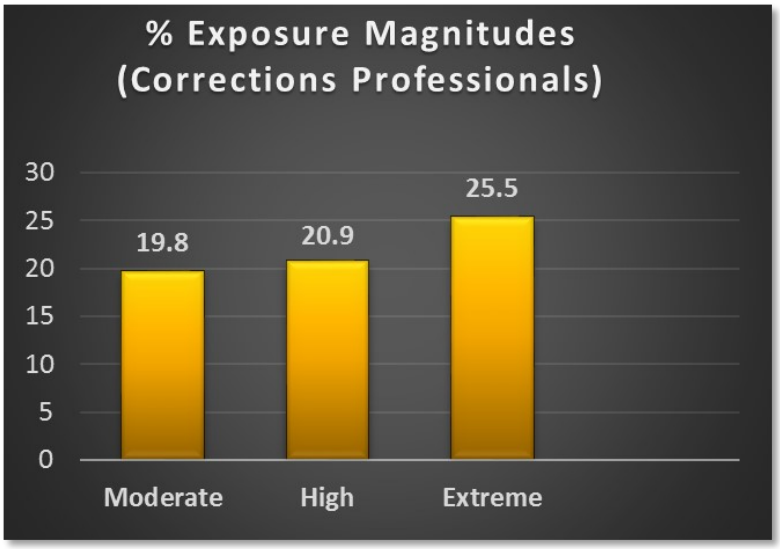
What Is Psychological Trauma? (continued from page 3)

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2014, correctional officers and jailers sustained 53.5 work-related intentional injuries by another person per 10,000 FTEs. This is much, much higher than the equivalent rate for all workers (2.9 per 10,000 FTEs), and even higher than that for police and sheriff's patrol officers (42.5 per 10,000 FTEs).[2] From 1999 to 2008, there were 113 fatalities among corrections officers, a fatality rate of 2.7 per 100,000 full-time employees.[3] Of the fatal work-related injuries, 25% were due to homicides. Of the non-fatal work-related injuries, 38% were due to assaults and violent acts.[3]

A large-sample study of health and functioning of 3599 corrections professionals was completed by Desert Waters researchers in 2011.[4] Among an abundance of findings, data bearing on the extent of exposure to events involving violence, injury, and death were surveyed.



(Denhof, 2014; N=592)

Corrections staff participants reported having been exposed to an average of 28 distinct incidents involving violence, injury, or death in the course of their careers, including an average of 5 different types of incidents. Examples of different types of incidents to which staff reported having been exposed to on the job included offender suicide attempts, murders, physical assaults, arson, and riots.

It is an established finding in research on PTSD that the likelihood of severe and entrenched PTSD increases with the number of types of traumatic incidents a person is exposed to, in addition to the frequency of exposure. An average of 28 occurrences and 5 different types, for corrections staff, reflect serious levels and of exposure.

To further assess corrections staff's occupational exposure to violence, injury and death, Denhof & Spinaris designed the Violence, Injury, and Death Exposure Scale[5] (Denhof, 2014). This is a validated assessment tool in the public domain designed to assess the magnitude of exposure to work-related events involving violence, injury, or death, of a spectrum of types, and including both direct and indirect forms of exposure, and recency of exposure. Using this tool, Desert Waters researchers found that about two-thirds of a multi-state sample of corrections professionals (66.2%) scored in the moderate to extreme exposure magnitude range, with 19.8% scoring in the Moderate exposure range, 20.9% scoring in the High exposure range, and 25.5% scoring in the Extreme exposure range.

This degree of exposure can be considered highly clinically significant. It is important to also point out that this sample was not composed of only security/custody staff, who have the highest and most direct levels of exposure to work-related traumatic events; 56.8% of the sample were non-security corrections professionals.

The VIDES assesses the degree of occupational exposure in relation to 12 different types of traumatic events, which are either indirect and direct in nature. When analyzed by trauma type, data collected by Denhof and Spinaris (2014) for each of these 12 types illuminates the pervasiveness of corrections staff exposure to often repeated, high stress, and potentially traumatizing events.

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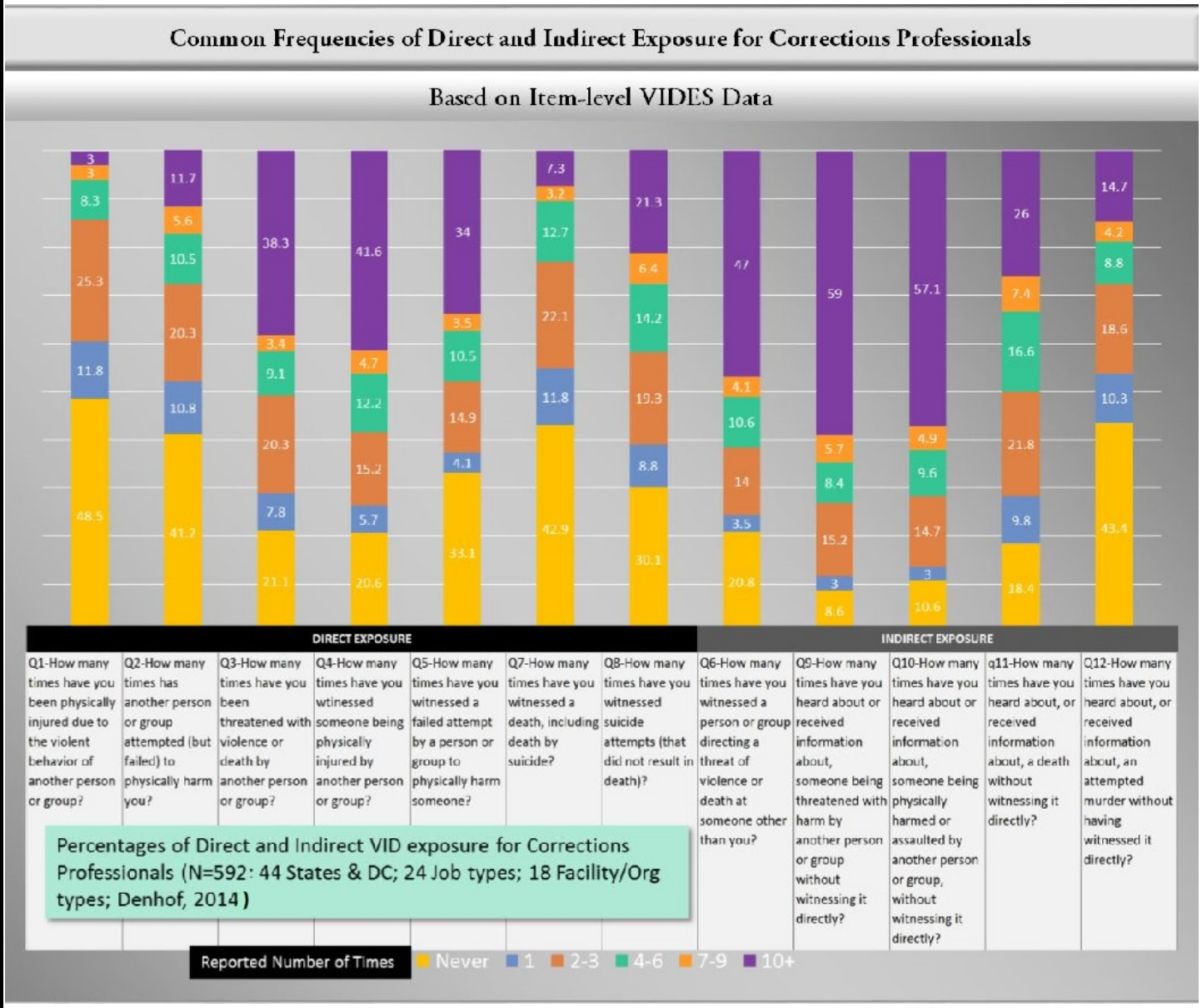
What Is Psychological Trauma? (continued from page 4)



In the stacked bar chart above are percentages reflecting the extent to which a national sample of corrections staff reported having experienced particular events *Never, Once, 2-3 times, 4-6 times, 7-9 times,* and *10 or more times* in the context of their corrections work. Yellow indicates Never and other colors indicate the percentage of staff reporting having experienced somewhere between 1 and 9 times high stress events of varying types.

Notable is the pervasiveness of the color purple that can be seen from bar to bar. The color purple indicates the percentage of corrections staff who reported experiencing specific types of job-related high stress events 10 or more times during the course of their career. An average of 30% of corrections staff reported experiencing high stress events of various types 10 or more times during the course of their career. That is a very large amount of exposure. The types of events included, for example, the number of times suicide attempts were witnessed, the number of times staff witnessed a death, including death by suicide, and the number of times staff were threatened with violence or death by another person or group.

Given the DSM-5's expanded definition of the event types that can result in psychological traumatization, and given research findings on the wide extent of traumatic exposure in corrections work, it become obvious that corrections

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is a high-trauma occupation, like police work, firefighting, and combat military activity. The negative effects of multiple exposures to trauma over the years, and even over decades at times, accumulate and become too hard for even previously healthy staff to bypass.

To be continued in future issues of the Correctional Oasis.

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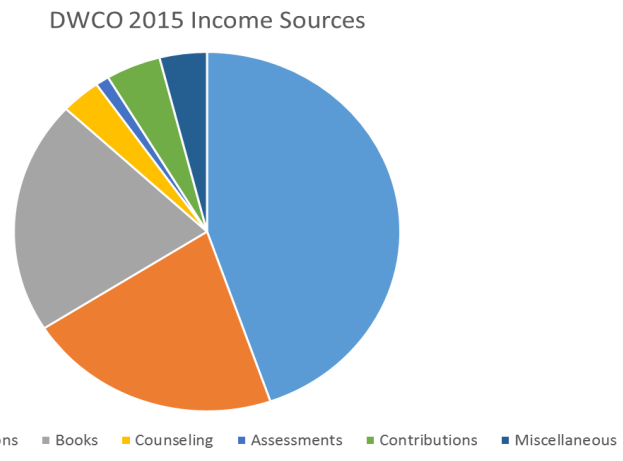
[5]Denhof, M.D. (2014). The Violence Injury and Death Exposure Scale (VIDES). http://desertwaters.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/VIDES_Data_Sheet.pdf

Desert Waters in 2015

- Offered services to corrections agencies in eight States
- Completed NIC Cooperative Agreement 13CS23GKP5 by offering two Instructor trainings for the course "From Corrections Fatigue to Fulfillment"—one of which was a double training (24 instructors)
- Offered an additional five Instructor trainings for the course "From Corrections Fatigue to Fulfillment"
- Offered the one-day course "From Corrections Fatigue to Fulfillment" once
- Offered four corrections agency staff wellness assessments, one through NIC 13CS23GKP5
- Offered the training *Suicide Awareness, Parts 1 and 2*, sponsored by the Fremont County Sheriff's Office
- Offered two webinars through Desert Waters' Resilience Academy
- The article Hazmat Suit for the Soul, Parts 1-3, was published by the National Institute of Corrections Library
- Wrote several other articles that were published in corrections.com
- Prepared the second edition of the book *Staying Well: Strategies for Corrections Staff* (published 2/2016)
- Total income: $138,280.04



PREA—Has it Gone Too Far?

© Susan Jones, PhD

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Editor's note: Yes, the Officer described here should have handled the situation differently from the start, by disclosing to her supervisor what happened regarding her computer security issue and the offender's blackmail. Perhaps due to fear of negative consequences for her oversight, she did not, and ended up paying dearly for it. This however does not detract from the main point of this article about offenders possibly using PREA to sexually exploit vulnerable staff.

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) of 2003 was passed, in part, to raise awareness of the public to the plight of inmates who may be sexually abused in prisons and jails. The goals of PREA are hard to criticize. Increasing the sexual safety of inmates is an important foundation to managing a constitutionally sound facility. However, the effect of this type of safe environment also increases the safety of the correctional employees and ultimately may positively impact the safety of the general public, when inmates are released. Even though there may have been occasions when some people may have implied that inmates deserve to be raped, especially if they committed a sex crime, the law and a civilized society demand a different approach to imprisonment.

The PREA legislation also mandates an audit process that applies to all prison, jails, community corrections centers, juvenile facilities and lock ups. The emphasis of the audits is to ensure increased sexual safety and ensure mechanisms are in place to report abuse or harassment. This federal act is built upon the premise that sexual behavior between inmates and staff is criminal, but it depends upon the individual jurisdictions to pass law that specifically criminalizes this behavior.

By the time PREA was passed, most jurisdictions in this country had some type of law that criminalized sexual behavior between correctional employees and inmates. Most of these laws included language describing inmates as being incapable of providing consent. In other words, absent physical coercion, the staff member involved in a sexual act with an inmate is always the perpetrator. Again, the logic behind the law is hard to criticize. After all, a correction's employee has the freedom to leave the environment. They have the keys, the backing of the government, and they have the power.

This description of the power dynamic is very textbook and simple to follow. The reality of the situation, however, is that the power dynamic inside correctional institutions is not always this clear. Power comes in many forms. In a correctional institution power can be gained by inmates in a variety of ways.

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If a staff member breaks a rule, and the inmate knows it and can prove it, that inmate may have gained some power when dealing with this staff member. When laws were created that clearly delineated the perpetrator in sexual incidents those laws gave inmates a different form of power. These laws may have given power to inmates to rape our correctional staff and be shielded from any consequences.

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PREA—Has It Gone Too Far? (continued from page 7)

A correctional staff member may find themselves in a situation where they could be sexually assaulted by an inmate and because of the threat of being labeled the perpetrator; they may choose to remain silent. This decision may be based upon the fact that they have made a mistake. Perhaps they delivered contraband to an inmate or knowingly allowed illegal activities to occur. Perhaps their transgression was much less serious, such as talking about their personal life in an area where inmates can listen. Even this type of mistake can be used by an inmate to mount a claim that the staff member was involved in a relationship with the inmate – hence, the staff member is the perpetrator.

The power dynamic is emphasized by the news coverage from the recent New York escape. An article by NBC News, on July 29, 2015 stated: "In May, she (Mitchell) said, Matt (inmate who later escaped) asked her to perform oral sex and she did, out of fear...." The facts are hard to get to in such a highly publicized event, but just for a moment I urge each of you to consider this statement. If this type of statement were made in the community, Mitchell would have been treated as if she were a sexual assault victim.

I know that many corrections people reading this will immediately dismiss this statement and the idea that a correctional employee may not report a sexual assault by an inmate, but I challenge you to consider this possibility. Has the PREA legislation given inmates a shield to protect them from being held accountable for a sexual assault? I know the first time I considered this I immediately dismissed it. How could any correctional professional not report an attack, no matter what the circumstances? I want to share one such story. Obviously the names have been changed and the descriptions of the particular facility has been concealed, but the essence of the story is very real.

Officer Smith was hired to work in the maintenance department in a very large facility. She was the first female maintenance worker in that particular shop, so she knew she would have to prove herself. Her training and orientation phase went well and when she reported to her post everyone seemed to welcome her. She hit the ground running because she was assigned to the tool crib and there was an audit scheduled very soon. When she got her tool crib in order, she began to assist other staff with their areas. She seemed to be such a part of the team and the team seemed to welcome her so totally, that she thought she found the perfect fit for a career. The maintenance shop did better in this audit than ever before, and she was given a lot of the credit. This was such a great start to getting into her new job, and she continued to try to help and excel.

Officer Smith can't really describe when things changed, but they did change. At first, she would offer help to her co-workers, but they would not accept it. As time went on, she was no longer included in the small talk that occurred at the beginning of the shift and at noon. Now these things may not seem that big of a deal, but it was a change from her first few weeks on the job. Eventually, she was only spoken to by staff when they needed her to check out a tool. Officer Smith began to feel like she worked in a cage all day and was only a cog in a machine.

By this time, most corrections people can predict what happened next, and you are right.

An inmate maintenance worker became the person that she talked to at work. That particular inmate was assigned to her tool crib so they had to work together to get the job done. Looking back, Officer Smith now realizes that she talked too much about her family and personal life. This particular inmate began to know information about her that she should have kept private. What she didn't tell him, he figured out by listening to her on the phone or by looking at her computer screen when she was distracted.

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PREA—Has It Gone Too Far? (continued from page 8)

The computer security rules required that she use a password for all computer programs, but there were many programs, so she kept a list of her passwords in the top drawer of her desk. Her inmate clerk saw her open that drawer many times throughout the day, and probably could have figured out what she was doing. To make matters worse, the computer was in the middle of the crib, so throughout the day when she had to walk 15 feet to the check-out location, she would rarely log off from her computer.

Officer Smith was not on the list to get highly sensitive emails, but the information she did regularly receive was enough. Her inmate clerk found specific information on her computer that led to a prison gang member assaulting a newly arrived inmate. Eventually, her clerk let her know that she was responsible for "giving" him the information that led to the assault. Of course, he didn't want to report this to her boss, as long as she would share food with him. The inmate clerk knew that she was a great cook by watching her unpack and eat her lunch every day. He just wanted her to bring enough for him each day. Officer Smith thought that this was a small price to pay for his silence.

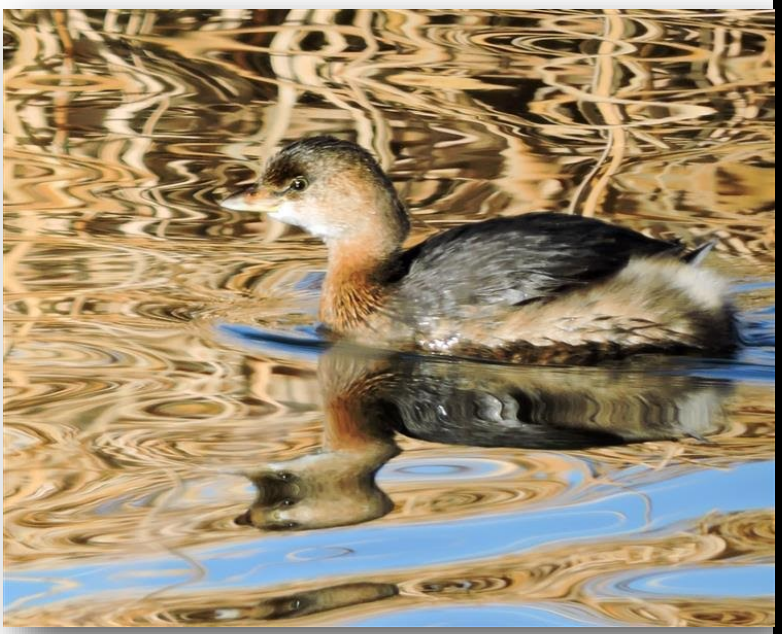
This arrangement continued for many months. Now Officer Smith was feeling much more comfortable that her clerk would not ask for anything else, or report her actions. Probably during this time she also became less guarded about her personal life again. As summer hit, the other staff members spent less time in the shop and worked on many big projects that had been put on hold until the summer weather. That meant that Officer Smith and her clerk were in the shop, alone, for long periods of time.

She will never forget the day it happened. She was walking out of the staff restroom when she felt pressure on the door. When she realized it was the inmate, it was too late. He pushed his way in and shut and locked the door. There was no talking her way out of this situation. The inmate was focused and determined to rape her. The assault was quick. The whole incident probably lasted less than 5 minutes.

When he was done, he told her to keep her mouth shut, because if she told anyone he would claim that they had a relationship. He reminded her that he had enough information to make someone believe that story. He reminded her that he would be seen as the victim. He left the restroom and went back to work. She locked the restroom door and reached for her radio, but she never pushed the button.

In the minutes she stayed in the restroom, she could hear the inmate working in the tool crib. He wasn't at all worried that she would call for help. He was very confident that he could rape her and face no consequences. She knew that he was right. She didn't think anyone would believe her, so she went back to work. She worked beside this inmate for the next two hours and then closed up the tool crib, just like it was a normal day.

Officer Smith described how she walked by the shift commander, her captain, and the warden when she left the facility. She didn't dare say a word to any of them. She left the facility and drove over one hundred miles to an emergency room where she would not run into anyone she knew. She went through the steps of getting assessed for STDs, but did not allow a rape exam to be conducted.



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PREA—Has It Gone Too Far? (continued from page 9)

Officer Smith called in sick for the next three days. She had to figure out what to do. Finally, she applied for a transfer position at a state office in a different city. This position was a significant demotion, but even with this reduction in pay, she felt she had no other choices. She worked for the department for only a few more months, and then moved to another state.

When Officer Smith talks about this incident, she brings up the training that she had for PREA. She remembers being told that the staff member is always the perpetrator and the inmate is always the victim.

I am not sharing this story in an effort to dismiss the importance of PREA. I am sharing this in an effort to try to reduce the likelihood that this type of unreported assault could happen in your agency.

Do you think Officer Smith would have been believed? Or would she have become the perpetrator? Did PREA go too far, and can it now shield inmates from criminal acts? Could this happen in your jurisdiction? Should this story influence the way PREA training is delivered? Email your thoughts to me about this.

Quote of the Month

"Getting over a painful experience is much like crossing monkey bars.

You have to let go at some point in order to move forward."

~ C.S. Lewis

Upcoming CF2F Instructor Trainings—Florence, CO

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Instructor Comments about the CF2F Course

This is a very valuable training that is relevant to the struggles that a great deal of correctional staff face. I appreciate very much the people who spent their time and effort in developing this. I wish I had this at the beginning of my career. It may have helped avert a number of personal struggles that the changes in me have caused or contributed to. ~ M.M.

Caterina helped to provide tools for me as a person, instructor, and a leader. Bringing additional tools back to our co-workers. ~ G.B.

This was everything I hoped it would be and more! I am so excited to share what I have learned with others. I believe in this material and the potential it holds to change lives. Thank you so much for caring enough to develop and share this program with us!! ~ S. B.

Staying Well: Strategies for Corrections Staff, Second Edition

We are very pleased to announce the arrival of the second edition of the Staying Well book, by Caterina Spinaris. The book has been extensively revised and also expanded with the addition of three new chapters.

Chapters:
The Toll of the Job; Corrections Fatigue; Taking Your Life Back; Professional Boundaries; Families in Corrections; Psychological Trauma; Depression; Moral Injury; Substance Abuse; Corrections Staff Suicide; A Spiritual Solution; Moving Forward

You can purchase it **HERE** using your PayPal account or your own credit card, or call us at 719-784-4727 to place your order by phone.

Endorsements

"I personally believe that this book will give corrections officers **hope**. It will also **equip them with the tools necessary to be effective at their job** while dealing with the stress of the workplace."
~Denny Kaemingk, Cabinet Secretary, South Dakota Department of Corrections

"The AOCE General Membership voted to purchase 1,000 copies of the Staying Well book. We then mailed the book to each individual staff member's home, so they and their families could read it. I have received **great feedback** from both our Officers and Non-Custody staff. **It has helped many of them in starting the process of healing.** If they don't know what's happening with them or how to fix it, they will remain stagnant or falter. The book is worth the money even if it only helps one staff member. Here in Oregon, **it has helped MANY and will continue to help many more for YEARS to come.**"
~Sgt. Michael Van Patten, President, Association of Oregon Corrections Employees

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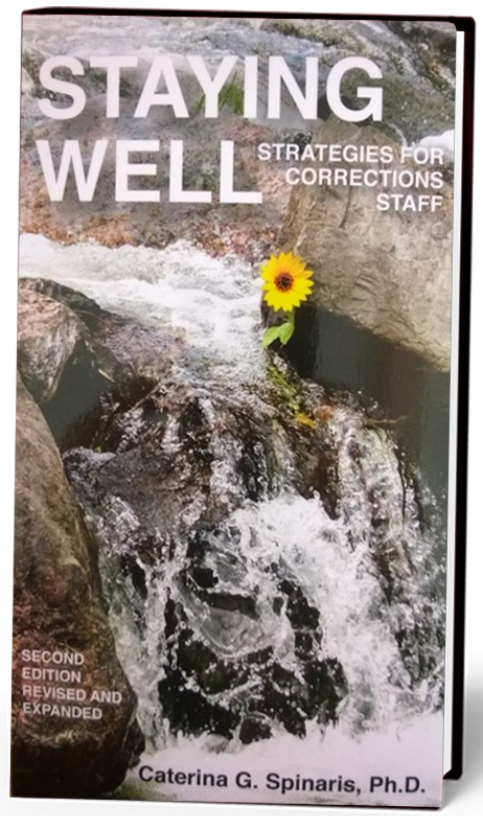

John's Very Bad Day at Work

By Joe Bouchard

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This is an icebreaker about staff's motivations to smuggle contraband in correctional facilities. The article can serve as basic information. After the instructor reads or distributes the information, the class breaks up into teams and takes a test. In it, scenarios will feature at least one of the following varieties of contrabandists:

1. **Thrill seeker**
2. **Libidinous**
3. **Compromised**

This article explores these three motivations of staff for smuggling.

Background material –The TLC of smuggling

I believe that most corrections staff are honest and honorable. They operate under dangerous conditions every day to fulfill the mission of safety for staff, prisoners, and the public. Corrections work is the epitome of public service. Corrections staff are indeed the hidden heroes of the Criminal Justice System.

Unfortunately, not everyone is honest. From time to time, stories break in the news about staff who smuggle contraband inside the facility. Despite the nobility of the profession, "dirty" staff are not absent from the equation.

When staff bring contraband into a facility, there are three chief dangers. First, a prisoner or a group of prisoners may become powerful and compromise security. The contraband item itself can be a source of direct or indirect power. Second, the staff person is a weak link who gives advantage to certain parties by overlooking misconduct. Third, once discovered, honest staff must reassess how much they had formerly trusted the smuggler. Trust between staff is a fundamental glue in corrections. When that bond is broken, we are less effective, as we spend more time scrutinizing each other than monitoring prisoners. Betrayal is a psychological hurdle that is difficult to get over.

I think that there are three main motivations for staff to smuggle. They are simple to remember by using the letters TLC. They are the Thrill seeker, the Libidinous, and the Compromised.

***T**hrill seeker*

Some people derive pleasure from deceiving others. The jolt that thrill seekers get from performing forbidden acts can be intoxicating and addictive. One of the most forbidden acts for corrections staff is to introduce contraband into the facility.

***L**ibidinous*

Another forbidden act—an illegal act and a cardinal corrections sin—is for staff to have sex with prisoners. Lust / "love" is a way that some fall under the spell of a prisoner. With that as a motivation, the relationship between smuggler and manipulator becomes one of puppet and puppet master.

***C**ompromised*

When some staff are caught in a mistake, they conceal it. In exchange for the false promise of not revealing the mistake, an enterprising prisoner may ask staff to bring in a small, forbidden item. Eventually, the staff allow themselves to be manipulated / blackmailed into misconduct. The trap is sprung when the prisoner's demands increase in size, seriousness and danger. Many staff-assisted escapes have root in a simple compromise.

(Continued on page 13)

John's Very Bad Day at Work (continued from page 12)

Scenarios:

Name the contrabandist type for each scenario. All of these are about the very generic staff member named John. Mark "T" for Thrill seeker, "L" for Libidinous, and "C" for Compromised. There may be more than one right answer.

1. John is a corrections employee who has a gambling problem. He learns that he can make a quick buck by bringing in drugs for a gang member who arranges for distribution of the contraband and for paying his mules. Once John gets started, he cannot stop. One reason is that he likes the rush. Another reason that John continues to bring in narcotics is that the prisoner for whom he mules showed him a letter to the warden that he wrote in case John "gets cold feet." [T, C]
2. John is in love/lust with an inmate and gets a rush from being almost caught in a sexual act. He will do anything to ensure the prisoner's comfort, including bringing in tobacco and matches for his lover. [T, L]
3. John hates authority and loves getting one over on them. He has no need for love or money, but gets an adrenaline rush from giving candy to prisoners during the holidays. Staff start to wonder why there are so many M & M wrappers all over Delta Unit's floor. [T]
4. John called a prisoner an asshole "as a joke." The prisoner threatened to tell the inspector if John did not bring in some gum. After he did, the shopping list got bigger. Now John brings in pain killers and Skittles, and also has agreed to perform sex acts for the prisoner on his command. [C]
5. John is bored at work. He cannot find any pleasure in any part of his chosen work. Then, accidentally, he left his cell phone in his pocket and took it inside the secure perimeter. He felt very alive as he left the facility. Now he routinely brings in the cell phone for his own use. [T]
6. John is caught having sexual intercourse in a broom closet with a coworker. Both of them are married. A prisoner hears of this and threatens to write to John's family unless he brings in credit card numbers, and a cell phone and charger. [T, C]

Note that one cannot tell John's rank, vocational niche, or time in the job. In other words, John can be anyone. Also note that all of these scenarios will end with John being compromised.

After these scenarios are discussed, the facilitator solicits from the class strategies on how to mitigate this sort of behavior and the collateral damage that comes from it. One can use the conclusion of the TLC article as a guide.

In a perfect world, zero percent of staff smuggle. However, the world is not perfect. How can we help mitigate this?

- Staff searches should be performed routinely.
- Understand the motivations to smuggle and look for tell-tale signs.
- Talk to your colleagues.
- Check yourself. Do not test the bounds of policy limits on items that can be taken inside.
- Refocus. Keep an eye on the mission statement when depression over betrayal rears its ugly and pervasive head.
- Do not isolate vulnerable staff. Otherwise, they may become susceptible to smuggle or other misconduct.

We will not always know who is about to compromise security. But understanding the motivations outlined in TLC is a start. Our safety depends on keeping contraband out of our facilities. This is consistent with the role of hidden hero.

Joe Bouchard is a Librarian employed with the Michigan Department of Corrections. This article includes his opinions. The agency for which he works is not in any way responsible for the content or accuracy of this material, and the views are those of the contributor and not necessarily those of the agency.

Desert Waters
Correctional Outreach

a non-profit organization for the well-being of correctional staff and their families

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